

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed September 6, 2006 and references cited therein have been reviewed. Applicants have amended the Specification to include a brief description of Figures 12 and 13 and to correct a grammatical error. Applicants submit that the amendments to the Specification do not constitute new matter. Applicants have canceled claims 1-5 and 9-22, amended claims 6-8, and added new claims 23-71.

Applicants confirm the election of Species I which is directed to Figures 1-10.

Applicants note that claim 8 was objected to. Applicants have amended claim 8 to address the objection raised by the Examiner.

Applicants have reviewed the Office Action and did not locate any basis for rejecting claim 20 even though the cover page of the Office Action indicated that claim 20 was rejected.

Applicants note that claim 6 was objected to as dependent on a rejected claim, but would be allowable if placed in dependent form. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 6 to place this claim in dependent form. Applicants submit that claim 6 and claims 7-8 which depend on claim 6 are allowable over the cited art of record.

SECTION 112(1) REJECTION

Claims 4, 5 and 9-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112(1) as non-enabling. In essence, the Examiner asserted that the originally filed application does not disclose the reason why the second microphone supported in the first microphone is critical or essential.

Applicants have canceled claims 4, 5 and 9-17, thereby making the rejection moot. Irrespective of this fact, Applicants submit that the originally filed Specification, drawings and claims support one non-limiting embodiment of two microphones supported on a pass-through of a mask. (See ¶ 0004, 0026, 0029, 0032-0036; Figs. 2, 3, 5-12). In one specific arrangement, one

microphone supports another microphone on the mask. (See ¶ 0004, 0026, 0029, 0032-0034; Figs. 2, 3, 5-10). The Specification, drawings and claims also support another non-limiting embodiment of the microphones not supporting one another on the mask. (See ¶ 0004, 0037; Fig. 13).

Applicants submit that the specification fully supports various embodiments of the invention as illustrated in Figures 1-13. The basis of the Examiner's rejection is unclear to Applicants. Each of the embodiments have different advantages regarding compactness, configuration and assembly on a mask, versatility regarding mask mounting locations, convenience and versatility regarding number of parts and changeability of parts, etc. Applicants submit that none of the embodiments are more critical than other embodiments. The particular embodiment adopted by a user can be partially based on the aesthetic design of different microphone assemblies, type of mask, desired mask and microphone assembly configuration of user, costs or manufacture of the different microphone assemblies, etc. Applicants submit that the rejection of claims under 35 U.S.C. §112(1) as being non-enabling was improper and should be withdrawn.

THE SECTION 102 AND 103 REJECTIONS

Claims 1-2 and 18-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Reed. Claims 3-4, 7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Reed. Claims 8 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Reed in view of Steelman.

Applicants submit that the rejection is now moot in view of the cancellation of claims 1-4, 7-9, 13 and 18-19. Applicants also submit that new claims 23-69 are not anticipated or made obvious in view of Reed and/or Steelman.

Independent claims 23 and 42 include the limitations that a) the microphone assembly is designed to be at least partially mounted on an interior of the mask, b) the microphone assembly

includes a first microphone arrangement and a second microphone arrangement, and c) each of the microphone arrangements include first and second electrical connectors that are designed to be electrically connected to the pass-through of the mask. Reed and/or Steelman do not disclose, teach or suggest such limitations. Indeed, Steelman and/or Reed do not disclose, teach or suggest a pass-through of any type. There is no pass-through disclosed in the mask of Reed. Steelman also does not disclose, teach or suggest a pass-through in the mask as defined in the claims. Reed also does not disclose, teach or suggest a pass-through that conveys signals between two microphones that are mounted at least partially on the interior of the mask to one or more signal generating components located on the exterior of the mask. Furthermore, the microphones 58 in the bars as disclosed in Reed do not electrically connect to any external microphone system as required in claims 23 and 42.

Claim 23 also requires at least one of the electrical connectors of the first microphone arrangement to be connected to an electrical connection of the pass-through of the mask that is not electrically connected to any electrical connector of the second microphone arrangement. Such an arrangement is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Steelman and/or Reed. Reed disclosed that the wires from both microphones 58 be connected to transceiver unit 44. Reed does not disclose that any type of external microphone system can be connected to the transceiver unit 44 so that signals from microphones 58 can be connected to two external microphones. The configuration disclosed in Reed is completely different from the mask and microphone system disclosed and claimed in the present invention. Steelman also does not disclose, teach or suggest the special connection arrangement defined in claim 23.

For at least the reasons set forth above, independent claims 23 and 42 and all the claims dependent therefrom are not anticipated or made obvious by Steelman and/or Reed.

In addition to the novel features defined in independent claims 23 and 42, several of the

dependent claims also include limitations not disclosed or taught by Steelman and/or Reed.

Claim 43 requires the at least one of said electrical connector of the first microphone arrangement to be connected to an electrical connection of the pass-through that is not electrically connected to any electrical connector of the second microphone arrangement. As stated above with regard to claim 23, this limitation is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Steelman and/or Reed.

Claims 25, 26, 46 and 47 require the first and second microphone assemblies to each include at least one electrical connector that is designed to be electrically connected to the same electrical connection of the pass-through. This limitation is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Steelman and/or Reed.

Claims 27-30 and 48-51 require at least one or both of the first and second microphone assemblies to be at least partially supported on the pass-through. This limitation is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Steelman and/or Reed.

Claims 31, 32, 52-54 require the first microphone arrangement to at least partially support the second microphone arrangement on the mask when the first microphone arrangement is at least partially connected to said pass-through. This limitation is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Steelman and/or Reed.

Claims 33-35 and 55-58 require the first microphone arrangement to be releasably connected to the second microphone arrangement. This limitation is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Steelman and/or Reed.

Claims 36-38 and 59-61 require the first microphone arrangement to be electrically connected to an intercom, a telephone, a radio unit, or a voice projection unit, and that the second microphone arrangement be electrically connected to a device different from the device connected to the first microphone arrangement. This limitation is not disclosed, taught or suggested by

Steelman and/or Reed.

Claims 39-41 and 62-64 require the first microphone arrangement and the second microphone arrangement to include different types of microphones. This limitation is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Steelman and/or Reed.

Claims 68 and 69 require the pass-through to be located adjacent an air supply portal in the mask. This limitation is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Steelman and/or Reed.

Claims 70 and 71 require at least one of the first microphone arrangement and the second microphone to be detachably connected to said pass-through. This limitation is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Steelman and/or Reed.

Applicants submit the claims presently pending in the above-identified patent application are in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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